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West Harlem Development Corp. holds public meeting

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Posted: Thursday, November 8, 2012 1:45 pm

By CYRIL JOSH BARKER Amsterdam News Staff | 0 comments

The West Harlem Development Corporation (WHLDC) is reporting that nearly 300 people attended a public meeting that it recently held. The meeting was about the progress and funding concerning the Columbia University expansion.

Representatives from Columbia were on hand at the meeting to report on workforce training programs and projects awarded to those in the community. Several residents from the neighborhood and community-based organizations attended the meeting. Some \$150 million of cash and in-kind services are slated to be injected into West Harlem.

Weekly E-Edition



November 1 - 7, 2012



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Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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community needs to know."



"I don't speak for what happened in the past, but I'll speak for what we are going to do going forward," said Executive Director Kofi A. Boateng. "The door is going to be open, and you are going to be free to collaborate and come with your ideas and come and talk to us. What you see here is a dawn of a new day of collaboration and partnership."

Assemblyman Keith Wright and Council Member Robert Jackson attended the meeting, where they offered encouraging words to the WHLDC. Jackson commended the organization's transparency in distributing financial statements to the meeting's attendees.

"Let me thank the West Harlem Local Development Corporation for holding this public meeting," Jackson said. "I want to know, when is the next one? The

Consultants for Columbia University explained that about 51.8 percent (\$31 million) of the total construction spending to date was paid to minority, women and local businesses (MML) and a total of 174,454 workforce hours (67.2 percent) were performed by MMLs, excluding special construction services. Several construction workers said that the crews at the Columbia expansion project had more minorities and women than any other worksite.

The WHLDC is finalizing its grant-making procedures with the hopes of giving out funding by the start of 2013 for projects in the areas of employment, economic development, housing, community facilities, education, environment, historic preservation, transportation and arts and culture.

"It may have taken longer than we had expected, but today is a celebration," said WHLDC Board Chairman Donald C. Notice. "Our first executive director, Kofi Boateng, who joined us in April 2012, has put together an office, a website and a team. He has worked hard with the board and cooperated with Columbia University and all other stakeholders to bring us close to doing what we all want: getting the money out into the community."

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